

Amendments to the Specification

Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 1, line 5 of the application with the following paragraph.

The present invention relates generally to the field of integrated circuit manufacture and, more particularly, to a method of facilitating the measurement of a mask critical dimension (CD) without removing a pellicle from the mask.

Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 1, line 19 of the application with the following paragraph.

To eliminate contamination of the mask surface, a pellicle is mounted on the mask surface. A pellicle is a thin (~1 μm um) polymer film stretched across a frame that is attached to the mask. Particles deposited on the pellicled mask fall onto the pellicle or glass backside of the mask, and therefore are several millimeters away from the features that are being imaged. With small depths-of-field, these particles will not be in focus and thus will not interfere with pattern transfer.

Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 2, line 1 of the application with the following paragraph.

As integrated circuit designs become more complicated, it becomes increasingly important that the masks used in photolithography are accurate representations of the original design layout. Unfortunately, it is unrealistic to assume that the an electron beam machine and other machines used to manufacture these masks can do so without error. Although mask makers typically repair most defects found at early inspection stages, invariably, defects are found at later inspection stages (such as after pelliclization of the mask has occurred).

Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 3, line 11 of the application with the following paragraph.

Yet another aspect of the invention relates to a method of monitoring a critical dimension of a photomask including a substrate having a first pattern in a first area, a test pattern in a second area outside of the first area, and a pellicle attached to the substrate which covers the first area but does not cover the second area, wherein a critical dimension of the test pattern is similar in magnitude to a critical dimension of the first pattern (e.g., since the first pattern and the test pattern are formed at substantially the same time under substantially the same conditions, their respective critical dimensions are substantially the same). The [[, the]] method includes the steps of measuring the critical dimension of the test pattern at a time when the pellicle is attached to the substrate; and estimating the critical dimension of the first pattern based on the measuring step.